

■ Employment Support Services for Foreign Service Family Members

Family Member Employment Report

The Family Liaison Office maintains the Family Member Employment Report (FAMER), a database for helping spouses identify overseas job opportunities. The FAMER lists current positions, staffed by family members at post, within the U.S. Mission and outside the Mission on the local economy. The FAMER database includes names of companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), schools and other educational institutions that employ USG family members. It also includes a Jobs Bulletin Board that lists current vacancies, and a description of the employment climate and process for obtaining a work permit in countries around the world. Once a Foreign Service employee is hired and begins training, the family member can access the Family Member Employment Report.

Job Advising

A visit or phone call to the Family Liaison Office can help a Foreign Service spouse with career management, resume building, job search strategies, and country-specific data relating to a job search. To make an appointment or speak with an Employment Specialist, contact the Family Liaison Office at 202-647-1076 or email flo@state.gov.

Special Employment Initiatives

In 2002, the Family Liaison Office received funding for a pilot program to assist spouses in networking and developing contacts with local, international, and U.S. organizations. The pilot program, known as the Spouse Networking Assistance Program (SNAP), is delivering services in 10 countries worldwide. For more information, visit the Family Liaison Office web site.

Training

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Transition Center offers training designed to expand employment opportunities for family members relocating overseas.

Classes include:

Employment Planning for The Mobile Foreign Service Spouse (MQ 700), Post Options for Employment and Training Overseas (MQ 703), Targeting the Job Market (MQ 704), English Teaching Seminar: An Employment Option (MQ 107), and Making Presentations: From Design to Delivery (MQ 111).

Distance learning classes are also available through the Foreign Service Institute, as is language training both in a classroom environment and via the Internet.

Online Resources

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

Click on Family Member Employment

Online Publications

Employment Options for Foreign Service Family Members

Bilateral Work Agreements and de facto Work Arrangements

Overseas Employment Information for Teachers

Overseas Employment Outside the U.S. Mission

Global Employment Monthly



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FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS IN THE U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE



The Family Liaison Office



Carrying one's career in a suitcase has always been a challenge for Foreign Service family members. Conducting professional networking in the global workplace takes time and a great deal of initiative.

The Department of State recognizes that employment opportunities for Foreign Service spouses vary from post to post. As part of its mission, the Family Liaison Office (FLO) assists spouses in identifying employment options for a mobile lifestyle.

■ Finding the Right Job

Each newly-hired Department of State Foreign Service employee must choose or "bid" on overseas assignments from a list of worldwide vacancies. While many factors come into play during the "bidding" process, the availability of overseas employment for family members is often a top priority.

For spouses who want to pursue careers, the Foreign Service "globe-trotting" lifestyle presents challenges, as well as opportunities. Family members are urged to research employment options during the bidding process, before the Foreign Service employee is assigned to any one country. With an understanding of the local employment climate, spouses looking to apply their skills and talents in the international workplace can make informed career decisions.



■ Working on the Local Economy or Overseas On Your Own

Following a specific career field, combined with international moves, requires flexibility, networking, preparation and hard work.

Working for an International or Local Business Overseas

Spouses with advanced training, certification and/or experience in a specialized field, often seek work opportunities on the local economy overseas. The availability of job opportunities in a given career field will vary from country to country. Salary compensation may also fall far below U.S. standards. While some family members find meaningful work in their chosen profession — law, health care, business or international consulting, public relations, accounting, teaching — flexibility and the willingness to work in areas outside of one's career field have proven advantageous to working spouses.

Bilateral work agreements/arrangements exist between the Department of State and 137 foreign countries, enabling spouses of U.S. diplomats to work on the local economy in those countries. Local laws concerning certification and other barriers (knowledge of the language or lack of job opportunities) may require family members to transfer skill sets into a new career field each time they move.

Freelancing

Developing a "portable" career is one way to survive international relocations and a changing international job market. The range of freelance activity among spouses includes: writing, editing and desktop publishing services; web design; teaching music, art, gymnastics, or aerobics; jazz singing; catering, cooking, or cake decorating services; ESL teaching; tutoring; and professional photography. While this type of employment offers great flexibility, the remuneration may be far below expectations. Spouses also have the option of operating a home-based business. Individuals should investigate host country regulations governing self-employment.

■ Telecommuting

In today's economy, employers realize the costs involved in hiring and training new people. Future Foreign Service spouses, who are gainfully employed, should discuss with their current employer the advantage of continuing to work from afar! Spouses interested in exploring this option should contact the Family Liaison Office for information related to telework.

■ Working for the U.S. Government Overseas

Work opportunities available inside a U.S. embassy or consulate vary from post to post, depending on the number of agencies represented and the size of the U.S. presence in that country.

Employment opportunities with the Department of State include positions in the following areas: Consular, Administration, Human Resources, Financial Management, Information Management, Community Liaison, Political, Economic, and Security.

Positions can be clerical, administrative, technical, or research in nature. Community Liaison office positions offer a unique opportunity to handle issues related to morale and quality of life within the Embassy or Consulate community, including welcoming and orientation, family member employment, education of Foreign Service youth, and crisis support.

Depending on the embassy or consulate, opportunities may also be available with other federal agencies. Foreign Service spouses have found employment with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Defense (DOD), among others.